

Tourism-led regeneration: insights from Timaru, South Canterbury

BUILDING BETTER
HOMES, TOWNS
AND CITIES

Ko ngā wā kāinga hei
whakamāhorahora

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Research question

How can local government and allied tourism development agencies realise the potential of a currently underdeveloped visitor economy and, in turn, provide a greater range of recreational services to visitors and locals?



Why Timaru?

- Once a thriving seaside domestic tourism destination
- Now wants to regain its attractiveness to domestic and international visitors.

The Township

- 2nd tier settlement/town, population of district (49,000), Timaru City (27,000)
- Seaside settlement:
 - I. Secondary food processing
 - II. Port
 - III. Agricultural/rural servicing
 - IV. Regional retailing and hospitality
 - V. Government services



The focus: tourism-led regeneration

- The study is informed by the urban and tourism-led regeneration literature
- Opportunities for tourism development are pursued strategically often, but not always as public-private partnerships – for the purposes of sustainable economic, social and spatial development.

Approach

- A co-production of knowledge approach
- Working with tourism officials, local government parks and recreation managers, accommodation providers and hospitality/event entrepreneurs
- They are interested in realising the potential of tourism development in the town.



Emerging ideas

- Our work is raising questions about state-market relations and the capacity of local governments and private sector agencies in small towns to engage effectively in tourism development without external help
- There is room for policy debate aimed at finding ways of supporting local regeneration initiatives
- Suggestions include central funding for local infrastructure and human capability building and support.
- The need for government agencies to act as information clearing houses to benefit local activity has also been suggested.

